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The big CHANGE

CONVERTING A FORMER CORNER SHOP INTO A TWO-BEDROOM FLAT AND DECORATING THROUGHOUT

1 Living area

'It made sense to put the sofa and dining table beneath the large windows, where they catch the light, but I love that this room is so flexible,' says Suzi

Vintage chair upholstered in Clarence Midnight, £110 per m, Colefax and Fowler. For a similar grain sack, try the tinder with house address, £22, Harrow & Green



'A home should have personality'

Take an original approach to decorating your house, letting Suzi Searle's 'modern eclectic' style inspire you

FOR WHERE TO BUY ITEMS SHOWN, TURN TO OUR SHOPPING DIRECTORY



Get the
LOOK
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'Challenges can sometimes lead to better solutions, as they force you to rethink your ideas'

Make it
YOUR OWN

Instead of buying a matching dining set, pair an antique table with modern chairs for a unique look





Take the 60-SECOND TOUR

BOUGHT FOR
£545,000

SPENT
£141,700

NOW WORTH
£1 million



THE PROPERTY

A corner shop, built in around 1890, converted into a two-bedroom flat in Hammersmith, west London. The owner bought it in 2013.

WHO LIVES HERE

Suzi Searle, an interior designer.

THE LOOK

Bright and eclectic, with colourful artwork and accessories set against a backdrop of pale-grey walls and wooden floorboards.

WHAT IT COST

Building work.....	£75,000
Windows.....	£17,000
Joinery.....	£9,000
Flooring.....	£7,600
Kitchen.....	£11,500
Bathrooms.....	£12,600
Curtains.....	£6,000
Lighting.....	£1,500
Air conditioning.....	£1,500
TOTAL.....	£141,700

LESSONS LEARNED

“Attention to detail can make even a small space appear really special. I planned the layout carefully so everything has its place, which creates a clean but relaxed look.”



FLOOR PLAN

The front door leads directly into the open-plan kitchen-diner and living area. Beyond is a utility room, guest bedroom, cloakroom and shower room. The main bedroom with en-suite shower room are at the rear of the flat

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2 Kitchen

Suzi designed the kitchen as part of the main living space. Sleek white units create a streamlined look. Oak Smoky Mountain floor, £68.33 per sq m. The Natural Wood Floor Company. Clerkenwell gloss white units, from a selection, Howdens Joinery



You know when you go out to buy one thing and come back with what seems like the whole store? Suzi Searle can relate to that. Last year she went flat hunting in west London and ended up buying a corner shop.

Situated in Brackenbury Village, near Hammersmith, the old shop filled the ground floor of a Victorian building. When Suzi discovered it in 2013, it was being used as an office. Prior to putting it on the market, the owner had obtained planning permission to change it from a commercial property to a residential flat, but the space Suzi was shown was far from homely. 'It had a horrible façade, two poky toilet cubicles, a tiny kitchenette and a windowless room that had been used for filing,' she says.

Yet Suzi had been looking for somewhere quirky and interesting, and she could see that this property was packed with character. It was also affordable. 'I needed somewhere that allowed the sums to add up, so I could afford to turn it into a space I'd love living in,' she says. Buying this flat meant that she had money left over to tick off all the homeware items on her dream shopping list.

Suzi is an interior designer (suzisearleinteriors.com), so she has a lot of experience in working out what layout and decorating scheme will make the best use of a property's features. 'I knew once I'd walked round the flat a couple of times what →

'I believe a home should reflect the person living in it'

3 of the best RETRO-STYLE CLOCKS



£30

Red alert

Use Roman numerals to get a period feel
The Countess clock, Newgate Clocks



£48

Face time

A numberless face on a sleek wood veneer
Madera clock, Bluesuntree



£70

Deco style

Add a touch of Twenties glamour to your room
Manhattan clock, Roger Lascelles range, John Lewis

3 Dining area

Suzi found the skis in a skip in Val d'Isère, France. 'I had the idea of using an old snowboard but couldn't find one,' she says. 'On my last night, I went for a walk and found these. I brought them home and asked a blacksmith to make the frame for the bench' For instructions on how to build your own snowboard bench, try eHow

4 Kitchen

'I thought that the mushroom-coloured units might be too dark, but the room came together when I laid the grey floor tiles and mirrored splashback,' says Suzi For a similar marble worktop, try the Carrara, from £200 per linear m, The Marble Store







'I opted for a wall that isn't full height, so I could retain the feeling of space'

I wanted to do with it,' she says. 'In order to make the most of the angles and dimensions of the corner plot, my goal was to create a sense of flow between the living, dining and kitchen areas at the front of the flat. I chose wooden flooring for the whole space, so there's a seamless transition between the zones.'

Suzi planned a new layout to make inventive use of the existing space and let in as much light as possible. The narrow corridors and small, dark rooms at the centre and rear of the property were rearranged to make way for a main bedroom with an en suite, a guest room (which Suzi uses as a home office) and a shower room. Major structural work had to be carried out, with supporting steelwork installed as walls were removed, and the outdoor space at the rear was paved to turn it into a smart courtyard.

'I bought the flat in September 2013 and the builders started work in December,' says Suzi. 'I lived in what seemed like a bomb site for four months, sleeping on a mattress in the loft space.' Suzi was required to keep the shop's frontage, but

was able to replace the existing glazing with new sash windows, and used frosted film on the lower half to provide some privacy. She had to obtain planning consent to install glazed doors in the main bedroom opening out to the rear courtyard. She also needed permission to move an exterior fan for the heat-exchange pumps that warm and cool the property from its original position in the courtyard to a new spot on the roof.

'The builders started at the front of the property, so I used a temporary kitchen at the back with a two-ring hob, sink and washing machine,' says Suzi. 'Fortunately, there was a tiny shower room already installed. There came a point, though, when I had to move into what is now my study, when the new kitchen was only half finished, so the builders could finish the back of the flat. That was pretty rough!'

The main bedroom, one of the last rooms to be completed, is packed with clever design ideas, such as a stud wall that divides an en-suite shower room from the main area. 'I opted for a wall that isn't full →

5 *Suzi's bedroom*

'The colours in the bedroom are softer to create a calm atmosphere,' says Suzi, who also created a bijoux guest sleeping space, accessed by a ladder

For a similar headboard fabric, try the Varese velvet, £64.99 per m, Fabrics & Papers

6 *En suite*

A gold-framed mirror adds glamour to the en suite

For a similar mirror, try the Kelmscott, £145, The Chandelier & Mirror Company. For a similar tap, try the Edge basin mono mixer, £129, Bathstore



7 En suite

A luxurious en-suite shower room is hidden behind a stud wall in the bedroom. 'The space is flooded with light from three Velux windows, so I used rich, chocolate-coloured tiles to add depth and warmth,' says Suzi

Rust Black wall and floor tiles, £74.40 per sq m, Stone & Ceramic Warehouse. Cloudburst 180mm shower head, £148; Cloudburst Universal ceiling arm, from £113; both Options range, Alternative Bathrooms



Shop for stone tiles

Smarten up your bathroom

■ **Stone & Ceramic Warehouse**

Find an extensive variety of stone wall and floor tiles, ranging from the natural tones of limestone and sandstone to more darker varieties in dramatic grey and chocolate. Take a look at stoneandceramicwarehouse.co.uk

■ **Stone Gallery**

Specialists in natural stone flooring and tiles, the range includes limestone, marble, slate and travertine in a range of finishes, from rustic tumbled limestone to glossy honed marble. Head to thestonegallery.co.uk.

■ **Mandarin Stone**

Find all you need to give your bathroom a sleek and seamless new look. Mandarin Stone has more than 100 different lines of wall and floor tiles, as well as a co-ordinating range of stone basins and shower trays. Visit mandarinstone.com.



8 Guest bedroom

'I originally planned to paint this room grey, but the white is perfect for the bright accents,' says Suzi. 'My office is my happy space and it needs to be inspirational!'

For a similar chair, try the Charles Eames-style ribbed short back office, £159, Cult Furniture. Rick Rack curtain fabric, £135 per m, Christopher Farr

height, so I could retain the feeling of space,' says Suzi. In the shower room, she had the floor raised and had tall cupboards built to lower the ceiling height. 'It meant I could install pipes below and a fan above,' she says. 'I use the cupboards to store camping stuff that I don't have to access very often.'

The work was completed in May 2014, with only one hitch along the way. 'I was going to put the boiler in a cupboard, but safety regulations meant it had to be relocated to a shed in the courtyard,' says Suzi. 'It actually worked out better, as now I have space inside the flat for a coat cupboard. Challenges can sometimes lead to better solutions, as they force you to rethink your ideas.'

Although Suzi comes up with decorating schemes for clients every day, she found furnishing her own home quite a challenge. 'Structurally, I had a vision of what I wanted,' she explains. 'But, when it came to deciding on fabrics, tiles and flooring, it was more difficult. My work means that I'm aware of all the possibilities out there, so it took me a while to decide

on my final scheme. Eventually I chose shades of grey as a base colour to complement my existing wooden and leather furniture, then used my favourite accessories and artwork to add bold shades of cerise, orange and blue.'

Suzi has combined rustic surfaces with sleek, luxe textures – a bench made out of skis, for example, sits alongside a marble worksurface in the kitchen. The finished effect is a mix of humour and glamour. 'I didn't want an anonymous hotel look with everything laid out in straight lines,' she says. 'I believe a home should reflect the person living in it. I've travelled a lot, so my flat is filled with treasures I've brought home with me.'

'Every piece has its place – I don't do clutter – but the layout can be moved around when I need it to be. It's a great space for parties – I had 14 people here for dinner recently and it was such a success, a friend suggested that I open a pop-up restaurant here. I'm not sure I'm ready for that, even though this was once a shop. I'm happy it's become a home.'

FEATURE ANDREA CHILDS STYLING RACHEL CHRISTIE PHOTOGRAPHS LUKA WHITE



Get the
LOOK
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9 Cloakroom

'I love the surprise on my guests' faces when they see this room,' says Suzi. 'A cloakroom is a great place to be playful decoratively. Natives Veracruz wallpaper, £135 per 10m roll, Elitis range, Occa-Home

'I knew once I'd walked round the flat a couple of times what I wanted to do with it'

Shop for statement headboards

Pack a punch with a customised design

■ Button & Sprung

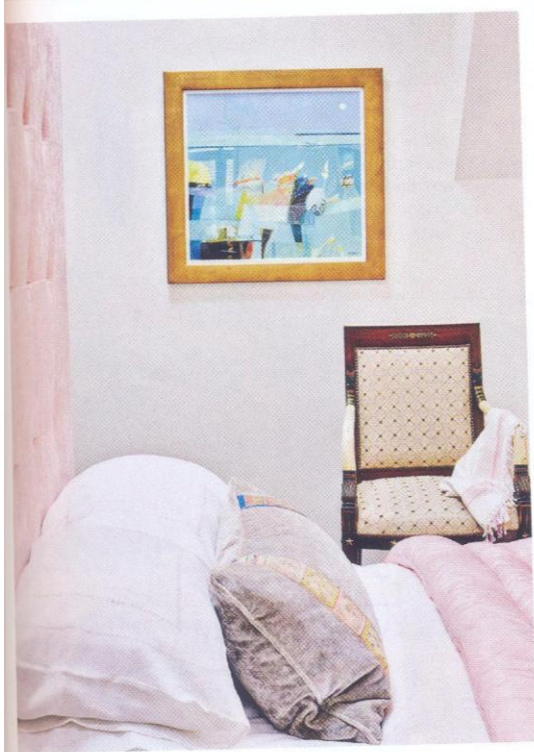
Build your own upholstered bed on this site, with 11 headboard designs to choose from. Select from more than 30 upholstery options, including linen, cord and velvet. See the complete range at buttonandsprung.com.

■ **The Dormy House** Want a headboard customised to suit your scheme? This MDF range includes shallow-buttoned, shapely regal, country gathered and retro-style

curved headboards. Discover more at thedormyhouse.com.

■ The Headboard Workshop

Can't find a headboard that ticks all your boxes? The Headboard Workshop can make a bespoke design to whatever size you require – giant headboards are in great demand right now. Just supply your dimensions and the company will quote you a price. Visit theheadboardworkshop.co.uk.





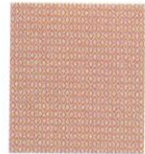
Use pattern and colour to liven up a neutral scheme

Start with these **ELEMENTS**



COOL GREY
Use this for a plain backdrop
Gauze Mid
Intelligent matt emulsion, £41.50 for 2.5ltr, Little Greene

AZTEC TOUCH
Add an accent to furnishings
Austin Weave fabric in Henna, £62.50 per m, Romo



REAL WOOD
Contrasts well with brights
Oak Smokey Mtn flooring, £68.33 per sq m, The Natural Wood Flooring Co



Get Suzi's look

Bring a cool, contemporary space alive with colourful finds and eclectic buys

FOR WHERE TO BUY ITEMS SHOWN, TURN TO OUR SHOPPING DIRECTORY

LIVING ROOM



Orange crush
An elegant footstool that can also be used as a colourful coffee table
Biscuit footstool in Bood Orange textured cotton, Loaf

£355

Light work

Place one either side of a picture to make it stand out
Brecht single wall light, Heathfield & Co



£248



£30

One-off
A special glaze and paint technique means no two vases are alike
Maude round multicoloured vase, Habitat



From £24.95

Art collection
The rich, red tones will liven up a plain wall
Sundance 1 by Kitti Narod canvas print, Easyart.com



£22 per pair

Exotic charm
This hand-stitched cushion cover was ethically sourced from artisans in India
Takka cushion cover, Traidcraft



£1,440

New neutral
Works as a calming contrast to bold colour and pattern
The Salute three-seater sofa in Charcoal (H89cm x W215cm x D98cm), Sofa.com



Love Suzi's style?

Turn your home-office space into a happy place, with this bold, energising colour treatment

FOR WHERE TO BUY ITEMS SHOWN, TURN TO OUR SHOPPING DIRECTORY



ASK SUZI

■ **WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR HOME?** 'I love the light.'

■ **DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN FIVE WORDS** 'I only have two: modern eclectic.'

■ **WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE LOCAL INTERIORS SHOP AND WHY?** 'Alfies Antique Market in Marylebone for its fabulous Sixties furniture.'

■ **WHAT'S YOUR WORST DECORATING DISASTER?** 'Painting the niches by my bed pink to match the headboard. It looked awful, so I changed them to grey.'

■ **WHAT ITEM INSPIRED YOU?** 'The old mirror in my en-suite bathroom. I worked the room around it to mix the old with the new.'

FEATURE LISA FAZZANI MAIN PHOTOGRAPHS LUKE WHITE



Add vibrant colour to create a fun, inspiring work space

BEDROOM



£37

Task light

This lamp's arm and head are fully adjustable
Barometer lamp, Ikea



Be bold
Go for all-out colour with this bright cabinet
Four-drawer cabinet in orange (H132cm x W47cm x D62cm), Bisley Direct

£336



Design classic

Sit comfortably in this timeless chair
Charles Eames-style low-back ribbed chair, Vita Interiors

£40.96



Retro choice

Channel *Mad Men* style
Acorn Mid-century desk (H76cm x W132cm x D61cm), West Elm

£499

Pattern power

Turn it into some punchy curtains
Marlow fabric in Henna, Romo

£57 per m



Animal magic

Hang up quirky artwork
Cow In Orange World framed print, Fine Art America

£339